

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 02981 171310Z

45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 AF-10

EUR-25 IO-13 ACDA-19 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 SCEM-02

TRSE-00 OMB-01 RSR-01 /182 W
----- 105999

R 171210Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4380

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2981

DEPT PASS CAIRO

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

KUWAIT PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SA

SUBJ: PRINCE SULTAN PRESENTS VIEWS ON SAG ROLE IN GULF

SUMMARY: IN WHAT EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS IS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT
POLICY SPEECH, MODA'S PRINCE SULTAN INFORMED GRADUATION AUDIENCE,
INCLUDING DIGNITARIES FROM ARAB GULF STATES, THAT SAUDI ARABIA
INTENDS RESPOND TO ANY OUTSIDE INTRUSION IN GULF. ASSERTING
SAUDI LEADERSHIP IN GULF, SULTAN MADE POINTED REFERENCE TO IRAN'S
AND KUWAIT'S GULF PRETENSIONS. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 02981 171310Z

1. MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND AVIATION PRINCE SULTAN IBN ABD AL-AZIZ GAVE ADDRESS IN GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR ROYAL SAUDI AIR FORCE CADETS FROM TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE IN DHAHRAN JULY 14. AT INVITATION OF SAG, HIGH-RANKING MILITARY DELEGATIONS FROM ALL GULF STATES EXCEPT UAE WRE PRESENT. KUWAIT WAS REPRESENTED BY ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, GEN ABDULLA AL-SABAH; BAHRAIN BY CROWN PRINCE AND COMMANDER OF ITS DEFENSE FORCE, SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISSA AL-KHALIFA; QATAR BY ITS ARMY COMMANDER, GEN HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL-THANI; AND OMAN BY ITS DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER, SHAIKH FAHD IBN TAIMOR.

2. SULTAN NOTED SAUDI ARMED FORCES BELONGED IN TOTO TO "SONS OF THE GULF" AND WERE AT THEIR DISPOSAL AT ALL TIMES. MORE POINTEDLY HE ADDED THAT COMMENTS REFERRING TO "VACUUM PREVAILING IN GULF" ARE STATEMENTS DESIGNED TO SOW DISSENSION AMONG ARABS. ANY INTRUSION INTO GULF, SULTAN DECLARED, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, WILL BE MET WITH RESPONSE FROM SAUDI ARABIA'S ARMED FORCES.

3. IN CLEAR REFERENCE TO IRAN, SULTAN ADDED THAT IF "NEIGHBORLI-NESS HAD A RIGHT", THE RIGHTS OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND BLOOD WERE THAT MUCH STRONGER. DEVELOPING THIS THEME, SULTAN CONCLUDED THAT PACTS AND TREATIES WERE WRITTEN BETWEEN FOREIGNERS AND "THOSE WHO WERE AMBITIOUS", BUT THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR SUCH ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN BROTHERS.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE HEARD THAT SULTAN CONSIDERED HIS REMARKS TO BE MAJOR POLICY SPEECH, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO BE CONFIRMED IN ANY CASE BY PRESENCE, AT HIS INVITATION, OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS FROM ALL ARAB GULF STATES WITH WHOM SAUDI ARABIA HAS RELATIONS.

5. SULTAN'S REMARKS CAN BE INTERPRETED IN VARIOUS MUTUALLY COMPLEMENTARY WAYS. FIRST, FOLLOWING HARD ON HEELS OF IRANIAN FORMER KHALATBARI'S VISIT, IT CLEAR SULTAN SEEKING DISCREDIT ANY RUMORS, BEFORE THEY BEGIN, OF POSSIBLE SAUDI-IRANIAN SECURITY PACT. (WHEN SULTAN VISITED KUWAIT EARLIER THIS YEAR, RADICAL IRAQI PRESS, AND SUBSEQUENTLY KUWAITI PRESS, SPECULATED HE HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING INVOLVE KUWAIT IN THREE-WAY PACT WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN. SAUDI SENSITIVITY TO SUCH CHARGES WAS CLEARLY SHOWN WHEN MODA SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED FORMAL DENIAL OF PUBLISHED CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 JIDDA 02981 171310Z

STORIES.)

6. EMBASSY WOULD ADD THAT WHILE SPEECH IS POINTEDLY AIMED AT LETTING IRAN KNOW SAUDIS DO NOT ENVISION IT AS HAVING CARTE BLANCHE TO OPERATE IN NEW GULF "VACUUM", IT SHOULD BE STRESSED (TO IRANIANS IF THEY INQUIRE) THAT SULTAN'S AGGRESSIVENESS WITH REGARD IRAN IS MORE CLEARLY AIMED AT ARAB, AS OPPOSED IRANIAN, AUDIENCE. EMBASSY BELIEVES AS SAG-IRAN COOPERATION GROWS, EVEN

AT CURRENT TURTLE'S PACE, SAUDIS WILL CONTINUE TO AVOID COMMITMENTS FOR PUBLIC COOPERATION WITH IRAN AND TO DEPICT THEMSELVES, AT IRAN'S EXPENSE, AS PROTECTORS OF "ARABIAN" GULF, LEST IRAQIS AND OTHER RADICALS BE GIVEN GRATUITOUS AMMUNITION.

7. SULTAN'S REMARKS ARE ALSO WARNING TO KUWAIT IN WAKE OF KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER'S RECENT SPATE OF CONTACTS WITH SMALLER GULF STATES AND RASH OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL AGREEMENTS WHICH FOLLOWED. SAUDIS CLEARLY TOOK A DIM VIEW OF THESE. IN SUM, SPEECH REPRESENTS CLEAR AFFIRMATION OF SAUDI INTENTION TO PLAY PRE-EMINENT ARAB ROLE IN GULF AFFAIRS. SAUDI NEIGHBORS MAY WELL ASK HOW SAUDI ARABIA PLANS IMPLEMENT SUCH ROLE.
THACHER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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